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Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award

Note by the Secretary General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981. The report, which covers 1999, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112 of 26 April 1982.

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Annex

Report on the United Nations Population Award (1999)

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201, entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions or to any combination thereof for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. Laureates are selected by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, which is composed of representatives of 10 Member States of the United Nations elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In 1997-1998, the Economic and Social Council selected the following 10 countries to serve on the Committee for a period of three years, beginning in January 1998: Burundi, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lesotho, Netherlands, Romania and Thailand. The Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as ex-officio members. The Executive Director also acts as Secretary of the Committee. The Award consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a monetary prize.

4. On 5 December 1986, by its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the annex to resolution 36/201, so that an individual and an institution could share the Award.

5. On 26 May 1987, by its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

6. In February 1999, the Committee elected Mr. José Luis Barbosa Leao Monteiro (Cape Verde) Chairman.

7. The terms of the five honorary members to the Committee who serve in an advisory capacity expired at the end of 1998. New members are to be selected by the Committee for three-year terms for the 1999-2001 period.

II. The 1999 United Nations Population Award

8. A total of 32 nominations were received for the 1999 United Nations Population Award from qualified nominators. Of these, 18 were for the "individual" category and 14 for the "institutional" category. In April 1999, within the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Dr. Seyed Alireza Marandi of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the "individual" category, and the National Committee for Population and Family Planning of Viet Nam in the "institutional" category, as the laureates for 1999.

9. Dr. Seyed Alireza Marandi was selected for his almost single-handed change of Iranian population policy. The Islamic Republic of Iran had a high rate of infant and maternal mortality, and high rates of fertility and population growth. As Deputy Minister of Health in 1983, and Minister of Health in 1985, Dr. Marandi promoted and expanded primary health-care centres, extending programmes against polio, measles, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases. He championed reproductive health activities and encouraged breastfeeding, longer child spacing and raising the age at which women should give birth to their first child to 20 years. He convinced the Government that family planning was not in conflict with Islamic teaching and that it had great value for both individual and national health. Infant, child and maternal mortality have all declined in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the use of contraceptives has risen and the birth rate has fallen.

10. The National Committee for Population and Family Planning of Viet Nam was selected for its significant contributions to achievements in the areas of population and family planning in Viet Nam. Established in 1984, the Committee plays a key role in the coordination, management and monitoring of population and family planning policy, programmes and strategies. The Committee's membership includes representatives of line ministries, mass organizations and non-governmental organizations. Its network of professionals and volunteers work in large and small communities throughout the country to inform and educate people about population and reproductive health, including family planning, to expand the range and quality of services, and to create and mobilize public support to

these issues. The Committee has been recognized in playing an important role in the rapid decline in fertility in Viet Nam.

III. Financial matters

11. As at 1 January 1998, the Trust Fund had a total of $736,511. Income from interest was $40,469 in 1998 and expenditures, including the prizes, totalled $30,228. The closing balance as at 31 December 1998 totalled $746,752.